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Women in the Labour Force "Basic Facts"

No. 2 in a series of fact sheets



TABLE ONE

Women in the Ontario Labour Force and Their Participation Rates¹

Number	Participation Rates
663,000	1960 31%
1,106,000	1970 41%
1,818,000	1980 54%
2,026,000	1984 57%

In the last ten years, the male labour force increased by 15%, and this was less than the 18% increase in the size of the male population. At the same time, the female labour force increased by 45.7% and that was well over twice the rate of increase of the female population.

This rise in participation has increased women's share of the total work force. In 1974, 37.1% of all workers were women. By 1984, this figure had increased to 43.4%.

TABLE TWO
Population and Labour Force by Sex
Ontario 1974 and 1984

Sex	1974	1984	% Increase 1974-85
Population	Male	2,849,000	3,364,000 18.1%
	Female	2,966,000	3,557,000 19.9%
Labour Force	Male	2,295,000	2,640,000 15.0%
	Female	1,391,000	2,026,000 45.7%

The preceding tables refer to the province of Ontario in total. There is a difference in the work force participation between women in Ontario as a whole and women in the Metropolitan Toronto area. The 1984 participation rate of Toronto women was 61.3% compared to 54.4% for Ontario women outside Toronto.²

UNEMPLOYMENT

In Canada and Ontario, the traditional view had been that the unemployment rate was lower than for men. However the data shows that the rate of unemployment was, and had been, higher for women since at least 1966.

EARNINGS

In 1983 the average annual earnings of full-year women workers in Canada was \$15,751. For men, the comparable figure was \$26,171. This earning differential is reflected across occupational groups.

TABLE FIFTEEN

Average Annual Earnings of Full-Year³ Workers in Canada - 1983⁴

Occupation	Average Earnings		Female as % Male
	Male	Female	
Managerial	35,250	21,883	62.1%
Professional	34,038	21,695	63.7%
Clerical	21,730	14,775	68.0%
Sales	24,074	11,718	48.7%
Service	19,806	9,319	47.1%
Farming, etc.	15,477	7,643	49.4%
Processing & Machining	25,140	15,134	60.2%
Product Fabrication	23,038	12,443	54.0%
Construction	25,159	-	-
Transport	23,350	13,660	58.5%
Total	26,171	15,751	60.2%

³This table includes all full-year workers, that is, those who worked 50-52 weeks. No distinction is made between full-time and part-time workers. Since a larger percentage of women than men work part-time, earnings differences are distorted.

In 1982 the average annual earnings for a woman working full-time were \$15,910; for a man \$25,562. Full-time women workers, therefore earned on average 62.2% of what men earned.

According to a report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Labour, "The two major forms of labour market discrimination that influence the male-female earning gap are wage discrimination (unequal pay for equal work) and occupational segregation (unequal job and promotional opportunities)."⁵ This report estimated that 5 to 10% of the wage gap was attributable to direct wage discrimination against female employees. A large part of the wage gap is a result of women still being clustered in jobs with low pay, low status and little room for advancement. For a variety of reasons, such as traditionally held beliefs about what types of work are appropriate for women or men, women are still less likely than men to pursue many of the higher-paying occupations or skilled trades. There is still a considerable difference in the education and job training that women and men pursue which results in substantial differences in earnings.

Another factor contributing to the wage gap is that far fewer women are unionized. In 1981 only 24% of women employees in Ontario were union members compared with 37% of men. As a result, many women lost out on the potential benefits of collective bargaining in obtaining better wage settlements and benefits packages.

Table Sixteen documents wage rates for office occupations in Ontario in 1983. The survey covers establishments with 20 or more employees. In all categories except one, male weekly salaries still exceed those of women.

In 1974, 22.0% of all Ontario union members were women. By 1982, this figure had increased to 30.7%.

TABLE SIXTEEN
Average Weekly Earnings for Office Occupations,
Ontario - 1983

Office Occupation (weekly)	Average Male	Average Female	Female as % Male
Accounting Clerk, Jr.	\$374	291	77.8%
Accounting Clerk, Sr.	431	345	80.0%
Bookkeeper, Sr.	473	363	76.7%
Bookkeeper-Bill-Calcu.	325	298	91.7%
Machine Operator Jr.	384	322	83.9%
Bookkeeper-Bill-Calcu.	308	269	87.3%
Machine Operator Sr.	353	328	92.9%
Clerk General Office, Jr.	430	386	89.8%
Clerk General Office, Int.	367	327	89.1%
Computer Operator Jr.	440	371	84.3%
Computer Operator Sr.	372	342	91.9%
Equipment Operator	443	341	77.0%
Cost Clerk	280	287	102.5%
Data Entry Operator Jr.	369	333	90.2%
Data Entry Operator Sr.	351	344	98.0%
Draughtsman/woman Jr.	451	425	94.2%
Draughtsman/woman Sr.	547	500	91.4%
File Clerk	308	263	85.4%
Office Boy/Girl	268	253	94.4%
Office Manager	573	489	85.3%
Order Clerk	388	296	76.3%
Programmer, Jr.	465	442	95.1%
Programmer, Sr.	570	520	91.2%
Secretary, Jr.	331	328	99.1%
Secretary, Sr.	390	378	96.9%
Stenographer, Jr.	364	310	85.2%
Stenographer, Sr.	361	340	94.2%
Stock - Records Clerk	387	302	78.0%
Systems Analyst Jr.	604	561	92.9%
Systems Analyst Sr.	686	632	92.1%
Telephone Operator	303	277	91.4%
Transcribing Machine Operator, Jr.	-	289	-
Transcribing Machine Operator, Sr.	-	322	-
Typist, Jr.	311	275	88.4%
Typist, Sr.	330	303	91.8%
Word Processing Operator	336	330	98.2%

UNION MEMBERSHIP

The growth of the female labour force has been exceeded by the increase in women's union membership

TABLE SEVENTEEN
Labour Union Membership by Sex, Ontario¹⁰

Union Members	1974	1982	% Increase 1974-1982
Male	768,263	759,045	-1.2%
Female	217,261	336,736	55.0%
Total	985,524	1,095,781	11.2%

TECHNICAL NOTES

1. All statistical data and definitions are courtesy of Statistics Canada.
2. All numbers are rounded to thousands and percentages are rounded to one decimal place. Therefore, numbers or percentages may not add to totals shown.
3. *Population* - The sample used has been designed to represent all persons in the population 15 years of age and over, with the exception of the following: residents of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, persons living on Indian reserves, inmates of institutions and full-time members of the armed forces.
4. *Labour Force* - is that portion of the population 15 years of age and over who, at the time of the survey, were employed or unemployed. People not counted in the labour force include those in the population 15 years of age and over who were going to school, keeping house, too old or otherwise unable to work and voluntarily idle or retired.
5. Housewives, students and others who work part-time are classified as employed. If they are looking for work, they are classified as unemployed.
6. *Participation Rate* - is defined as the percentage of the population (defined above) who are in the labour force.
7. Statistics quoted for the 1950s are from unrevised data; all statistical data are revised.

FOOTNOTES

1. All statistical data are from Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue 71-001 (monthly report and annual averages), unless otherwise noted.
2. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Division (LFS), unpublished data.
3. Statistics Canada, Historical labour force statistics - actual data, seasonal factors, seasonally adjusted data, catalogue 71-201 (annual), 1984.
4. Statistics Canada, LFS, unpublished data.

5. Ibid.
6. All data on low income families found in Statistics Canada, Income Distributions by size in Canada, Catalogue 13-207 (annual), 1983.
7. Statistics Canada, LFS, unpublished data.
8. Statistics Canada, Income Distributions by size in Canada, catalogue 13-207, (annual), 1983.
9. Morley Gunderson, "The Male-Female Earnings Gap: A Summary", Ontario Ministry of Labour, 1982, p.1.
10. Statistics Canada, Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act. Part II - Labour Unions, Catalogue 71-202 (annual), 1982.

INTRODUCTION

While it was once the norm for a Canadian woman to stay home and look after her family and household, times have changed. There was a brief period, during World War II, when women were recruited to work in factories and replace the men who had gone off to war. Generous child care programs made it possible for women to enter the work force in unprecedented numbers. However, when the war ended so did the child care, and as the men returned the women were asked to relinquish their jobs and return to their homes.

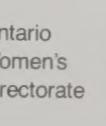
During the post-war period there was a great push to restore traditional family life, and one of the results was the baby boom. However, as time went by, greater numbers of women left the home and went out to work. During the past 25 years, Ontario has undergone dramatic social change as a result of this trend for women to enter the paid work force.

The reasons women work are many and varied. For many, working is an economic necessity - they may be self-supporting by virtue of being single, separated, divorced or widowed - they may have husbands who are unemployed, disabled or unable to bear the financial burden of a family alone. Many women choose to work in order to achieve career goals, improve their self image, or make a contribution to society.

Whatever the reasons, there are now more women in the work force than women at home and that fact has changed the face of contemporary society in Ontario.

LABOUR FORCE ACTIVITY

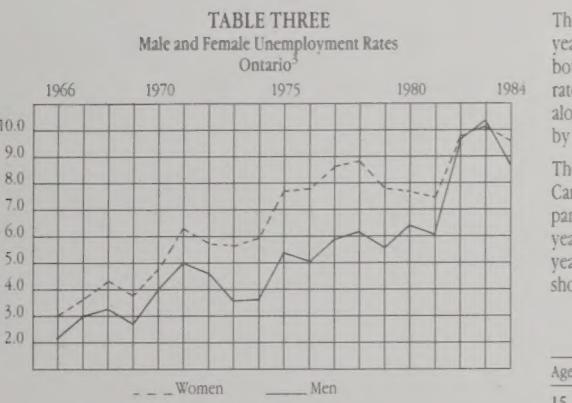
The number of women working in this province has more than tripled in the past twenty-four years. At the same time, women's participation rate (the percentage of all women who work) has almost doubled.



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The most significant increases over the last 20 years are in the 25-44 year group where the level of activity has more than doubled and in both the 20-24 and 45-64 age groups where the 1984 participation rate is almost 150% of what it was in 1964. In the past ten years alone, the participation rate of the 25-44 year group has increased by more than 20%. The highest participation rate of women in both Ontario and Canada is in the 20-24 year group. Almost as high is the 73.7% participation rate of Ontario women in the 25-44 year range. These years, commonly called the chief childbearing and childrearing years had once been associated with mothers staying at home. As shown in Table Six, this is no longer the case.

TABLE SIX
Participation Rates by Age, 1984

Age	Canada	Ontario
15-19	50.3%	57.7%
20-24	74.6%	77.9%
25-44	69.1%	73.7%
45-64	46.5%	50.9%
65+	4.7%	4.2%
All Ages	53.5%	57.0%

However in recent years the gap has narrowed significantly and in 1983 the unemployment rate for men was 0.1% higher than the rate for women. In 1984 the female unemployment rate returned to the higher position. However the gap between the unemployment rates of men and women has been insignificant since 1982.

TABLE FOUR
Unemployment Rates by Sex - Canada and Ontario
Rate of Unemployment

	Canada		Ontario	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1966	3.3%	3.4%	2.3%	3.1%
1975	6.2%	8.1%	5.4%	7.8%
1980	6.9%	8.4%	6.2%	7.7%
1984	11.2%	11.4%	8.7%	9.6%

As shown in Table Four, the unemployment rate for women in Ontario rose from 3.1% in 1966 to 9.6% in 1984. At the same time, women in Canada were faced with an increase in unemployment rates from 3.4% to 11.4%.

In Ontario, women now make up 46% of all unemployed workers. In 1966, only 39% of the unemployed were female.

AGE

During the past twenty years, there has been a dramatic increase in levels of labour force participation for women of all ages.

TABLE FIVE
Participation Rates - Canada

Age	1964*	1974	1984	% Change
15-19	29.9%	36.7%	50.3%	
20-24	51.1%	63.0%	74.6%	
25-44	31.7%	46.6%	69.1%	
45-64	31.6%	37.4%	46.5%	
65+	6.3%	4.2%	4.7%	
All Ages	30.5%	39.7%	53.5%	

*Age 14-19 for 1964 & 1974.

MARITAL STATUS

The participation rate of women in the labour force has increased dramatically since the early 1950's. Perhaps the greatest change has been in the numbers of married women choosing either to remain in the paid work force or to re-enter it after an absence of some years.

In 1951, only 15% of married women in Ontario worked outside the home. By 1966, this figure had changed to 31.6%. In 1974 there was a further increase to 41.7% and in 1984 the figure reached 57.4%, almost four times as high as in 1951.

TABLE SEVEN
Participation Rates by Marital Status - Ontario⁴

Marital Status	1974	1984	% Change
Married	41.7%	57.4%	15.7%
Single	58.0%	70.1%	12.1%
Other*	32.1%	37.1%	5.0%
Total	44.0%	57.0%	13.0%

*Separated, Divorced, or Widowed.

As noted in Table Seven, there has been increased participation by all women since 1974. The greatest change, however, was the increase of 15.7% for married women; there was a 12.1% increase for single women and 5.0% for other women.

The presence in 1984 of 1,246,000 married women in the labour force has contributed to a change in attitudes concerning the commitment a woman will make to a job. The assumption that a woman will work only until she is married is outdated and generally untrue.

CHILDREN

Since the mid-1970's there has been a dramatic increase in the labour force participation of women with children. In 1975, there were 538,000 women in the Ontario labour force with children under the age of 16. By 1980 this figure was 650,000, an increase of 20.8% in five years. In 1984 there were 721,000, a further increase of 10.9% from 1980 to 1984. Participation rates rose from 48.0% in 1975 to 58.2% in 1980 and to 64.6% in 1984. It is interesting to compare these figures to the overall participation rate for women between the ages of 20-44, the chief childbearing and childrearing years. In 1975, the participation rate for all women in this age group was 61.2% while in 1980 it was 69.7% and in 1984 it was 74.7%.

In two-parent families with children under the age of six, the picture is somewhat different. In Canada, 39.4% of such families where both husband and wife worked earned less than \$20,000. Where the husband was the sole income recipient, only 34.4% of families fell into this income category.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The level of educational attainment of the Ontario labour force has continued to rise. The female labour force, however, is still somewhat better educated, on average, than the male.

TABLE EIGHT
Women in the Ontario Labour Force
by Presence of Children and their Participation Rates
by Ages of Youngest Child⁵ 1975, 1980, and 1984

Age of Youngest Child	Number of Women	Participation				
	1975	1980	1984	1975	1980	1984
Less than grade 9				13.8%	9.4%	
High school				49.6%	52.8%	
Some post-secondary				10.3%	11.3%	
Post-secondary certificate or diploma				11.3%	14.4%	
University degree				15.0%	12.1%	
Total	538,000	650,000	721,000	48.0%	58.2%	64.6%

PART-TIME WORK

In 1984, 25.9% of all women in the Canadian labour force, that is 1,200,000 women, were classified as part-time workers.

TABLE NINE
Number and Percentage of Labour Force Working Part-Time - Canada

	1975		1984	
	Number of Part-time	% of all Workers	Number of Part-time	% of all Workers
Men	301,000	5.1%	489,000	7.7%
Women	687,000	20.3%	1,200,000	25.9%
Total	988,000	10.6%	1,689,000	15.4%

FINANCIAL NEED TO WORK

In 1984, 780,000 or almost 40% of all women in the Ontario labour force were single, separated, divorced or widowed. These women are almost entirely self-supporting and work out of necessity. In addition there are married women in Ontario who provide sole-support for their families because their husbands are unemployed, disabled or absent.

Female family heads form one of the most disadvantaged groups in our society. In Canada in 1983, the average yearly income of a male-headed family was \$33,454; that of a female-headed was \$15,158. Although 14.0% of all Canadian families are classified as low income, 49.1% of those with a female head fall into this category.⁶

Many married women whose husbands work, also work outside the home because two incomes are required to support the family. In 1984, the average income of a husband-wife family in Canada with the husband only working was \$26,692. Where the husband and wife both worked, the average income was \$35,608.

In two-parent families with children under the age of six, the picture is somewhat different. In Canada, 39.4% of such families where both husband and wife worked earned less than \$20,000. Where the husband was the sole income recipient, only 34.4% of families fell into this income category.

TABLE ELEVEN
Female Participation Rates by Level of Education
Ontario - 1984⁷

Level of Education	Female Labour Force Participation Rate
Less than grade 9	29.6%
High school	57.8%
Some post-secondary	68.4%
Post-secondary certificate or diploma	71.0%
University degree	77.6%

In Table Thirteen, the major occupational groups in Canada are examined to demonstrate what percentage of their employees are women. Predictably, the occupational areas with women in the majority are clerical and service. Women are also a strong contingent in the managerial/professional area (44.4% of employees). If this area is broken down into smaller categories, one still finds many women in the traditional fields of teaching and nursing.

TABLE THIRTEEN
Women Employees as a Percentage of Major Occupational Groups,
Canada - 1984

Occupational Group	Women as a % of Total Employees
Clerical	79.1%
Service	55.8%
Managerial, Professional	44.4%
Sales	43.4%
Material Handling and Other Crafts	20.9%
Processing	20.8%
Primary Occupations	19.2%
Transportation	7.0%
Construction	1.8%

*Some categories differ from those listed in Table Twelve, for example, the managerial/professional category is divided into more detailed sub-groups, e.g. teaching.

TABLE TWELVE
Percentage Distribution of Men & Women by Occupational Group,
Canada - 1984

Occupation	% Women in Category	% Men in Category
Managerial & Administrative	7.5%	11.7%
Natural Sciences, Engineering & Mathematics	1.3%	4.8%
Social Sciences	2.1%	1.2%
Religion	0.1%	0.4%
Teaching	5.7%	2.8%
Medicine & Health	8.5%	1.7%
Artistic, Literary & Recreational	1.5%	1.7%
Clerical	31.4%	6.1%
Sales	9.5%	9.1%
Service	18.6%	10.8%
Agriculture	2.6%	5.7%
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping	-	0.5%
Forestry & Logging	0.1%	1.2%
Mining & Quarrying	-	1.0%
Processing		